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# *Food and Home Notes*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
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## H.F.C.S. (HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SIRUP)

### — A NATURAL SWEETENER

High fructose corn sirup, a newcomer on the sweetener scene is a natural sweetener that is two-thirds as sweet as regular corn sirup. It's neither a toxic substance nor a chemical additive. You may find it in soft drinks, canned or frozen fruit, preserves, or even in bakery products...anywhere moisture is desirable.

But -- you won't find it in most confectionery, presweetened dry cereals or packaged prepared cake mixes. The reason is that it's "hygroscopic," which means it draws moisture from the air -- thus would not be suitable and would produce a soggy effect on things such as dry cornflakes.

However -- HFCS is not always available, because, so far, only three firms make it in substantial quantities. Because of the increased interest in it, however, this may change. For 1975, it is estimated that consumers used about 18 pounds of corn sirup, which included HFCS. That's five pounds more corn sirup than was used in 1970, according to figures from the Economic Research Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture -- HFCS contributed to this marked increase. It is predicted that corn sirup consumption may increase up to 5½ times that by 1980. But regular corn sirup is cheaper than HFCS so the cost-factor will be important too.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How should muffins be mixed?

Muffins should be mixed only until the dry ingredients are moistened...Overmixing will result in a poor texture with large holes and tunnels.

What type of wrapping should you use for freshly baked foods, such as bread and rolls?

Use a moisture-vapor resistant materials. Wrap only after they are cool...this helps to keep them moist, according to USDA home economists.

Should freshly baked bread and rolls be placed in some type of container for freezing? Not necessarily--but wrap or bag it tightly.

Freeze the food as soon as it has cooled after baking. Wrap the product well (as above) or place it in a freezer container or carton excluding as much air as possible before you close the container or package.

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### HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SIRUP (CONT.)

Other corn sweeteners and sugar have recorded little change in consumption; dextrose has not changed much in the past five year period, but saccharin is up slightly. Saccharin, — the only noncaloric sweetener commercially produced in the United States since cyclamate was banned in 1970 -- is a limited substitute however, because some consumers mention the problem of "aftertaste." It doesn't work as well as a fermentable base for yeast (as sugar does) in bakery products. Predictions are that the use of dextrose and saccharin will not change much in the near future but the amount of corn sirup we use probably will depend on sugar price levels. However, the saccharin market doesn't seem to be affected by price increase.



## IMPORTED MEATS

## ----- AND USDA

Did you know that all meat and poultry imported into the United States must be inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture? This meat must meet the same high standards applied to meat and poultry in the United States.

Meat can be imported only from certain countries that have inspection systems equal to that of the United States.

How do foreign countries become eligible to export to the United States? They must first apply for eligibility -- then USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service reviews the country's laws and regulations. If these are satisfactory, a USDA veterinarian visits the country to make sure that the inspection system -- laws, regulations, inspection procedures, sanitation, personnel and the entire operation -- meets U.S. standards. In 1975, there were 45 countries eligible to export meat to the United States.

Once the country has been approved, its head meat inspection official must certify individual plants to USDA as fully meeting our requirements. To confirm this USDA veterinarians visit the certified plants several times a year. Most of these plants (83% of them) are in only seven countries -- Argentina, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Poland. Some countries have only one or two certified plants.

There are 21 veterinarians in the Foreign Programs Staff of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, who are responsible for surveillance over foreign plants and inspection systems. In 1966, when the program was initiated, there were only 6 veterinarians assigned to this task. Prior to 1966, USDA made only occasional visits to the exporting countries.

## IMPORTED MEATS ----- AND USDA (CONT.)

When a USDA reviewer finds a foreign plant deficient, he reports this to his superior, who then requests the foreign government to "delist" the plant. In 1975, 99 plants were removed from the approved list.

As a further check in the wholesomeness of imported meat, USDA inspectors are assigned to the U.S. ports of entry, where they inspect each shipment before it can enter the United States. Meats which do not conform to our strict standards are refused entry and must be reexported -- or destroyed for human food purposes by incineration, or, in some cases, converted to animal food.

The types of meat imported include fresh, fresh frozen, canned and dried. The major imports are frozen boneless beef, veal, lamb and canned hams. Only a small percentage of our poultry is imported. This includes fresh poultry from Canada, canned goose liver pate from France, and Chinese Style Dinners from Hong Kong. Only these three countries are eligible to ship poultry products.

How may a consumer tell if he is buying an imported meat product? Imported processed meat products inspected and passed by USDA must show -- in a prominent place -- on the container, the name of the country of origin, such as "Product of Denmark." Imported meat which is processed in the United States into such products as stew, hamburger, frankfurters, TV dinners, etc. loses its identity as imported meat since there is no practical method of retaining the foreign identification. This same practice is followed in other industries where imported raw materials are used to make products in this country.

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